

## U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Visits RRF Ship in New Orleans

By Bill Cahill, Office of Ship Operations



*U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta (Center) talking to USCG COTP CAPT Frank Paskewick (in blue uniform) beside the MARAD RRF ship Diamond State in the Port of New Orleans on September 14, after announcing: "I want the people of New Orleans to know that we are going to help you rebuild, and that includes repairing damaged transportation systems so New Orleans can get moving again."*

*Photo by Dee Varshney, Acting Region Director, Central Region*

On September 14, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta traveled to New Orleans to announce the first installment of federal funding and the deployment of additional resources to repair damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina on the area's transportation systems.

"I want the people of New Orleans to know that we are going to help you rebuild, and that includes repairing damaged transportation systems so New Orleans can get moving again," Secretary Mineta said.

Secretary Mineta, who had initiated the unprecedented activation of U.S. Maritime Administration-owned Ready Reserve Force (RRF) ships to assist in the recovery effort, visited the port facilities of New Orleans and toured the RRF ship *Diamond State*. The *Diamond State* is specially configured to offload container ships in damaged or unimproved ports. At the time of the Secretary's visit,

the *Diamond State* was providing electrical power to port facilities and housing 40 port workers.

The U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) activated eight ships from the RRF to aid the area's economic recovery by helping to rebuild the infrastructure. MARAD also ordered the release of three state maritime academy training ships to house a total of over 1,000 relief workers, port employees, stevedores, and petroleum industry workers—people with skills and abilities critical to vital recover efforts.

The Secretary was accompanied by the director of the port, Gary LaGrange, and several members of the press. A press conference was held on the open deck of the ship where the Secretary and port director praised the quick response by MARAD and the dedication of the ship's master and crew.

### MARAD Update

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